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Compassion and Action in a time of Crisis and Disaster

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attack on America. Also, August 29, 2011 marked the 6th anniversary of when Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans. This year, on March 11, 2011, a 9.0 earthquake hit Japan followed by a massive tsunami. More than a year earlier, on January 12, 2010, a 7.0 earthquake hit Haiti. On December 26, 2004, a 9'

megathrust tsunami hit Sri Lanka. For the last ten years, globally, we have seen, heard, and/or felt disasters or crises that have impacted our families, friends, and colleagues in higher education. As a result of these events, in the spirit of humanity, we demonstrate our compassion to our colleagues in the educational community.

Since I arrived in New Orleans in 2009, I have observed the BP Oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the overflow of the Mississippi River. I've bought rain boots, jackets, a hat, a steady umbrella and other hurricane items for my home. I've also come to accept that there are acts of nature that we, the human race, cannot detect precisely or effectively respond to in a timely manner, but no matter the incident, there is always a clean-up phase. It is during this phase that we come together to figure out how to respond. At my own institution, Dillard University, the campus was flooded with more than eight feet of water during Hurricane Katrina. Immediately following the storm, according to President Marvalene Hughes at that time, we sent our students to study at over 200 colleges and universities across the country. In January 2006, for six months, 1,000 students, faculty, staff and families lived and attended classes in the Hilton Hotel New Orleans Riverside ([Dillard University, Five Years after Katrina](#)).

According to President Scott S. Cowen, Tulane University planned to reopen its doors during the same time period in January 2006 (*Trusteeship, November/December 2005*). Cowen described how nine higher education associations convened in a conference call and issued a statement on how institutions around the nation could accommodate the displaced students. Most recently, in notes commemorating the Sixth Year Katrina anniversary, Mayor

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Landrieu ([New Orleans notes Katrina Anniversary, 2011 United Press International](#)) said, “the most important thing that you can do after disasters is to build your schools first.” Bill Clinton, at the third annual Clinton Global Initiative University at the University of Miami (Mary Beth Marklein, USA Today, April 22, 2010) echoed similar words about reopening colleges in Haiti.

In POD's Spring 2011 President's Message, on behalf of POD, I expressed our sympathy, compassion, and resources to Japan for the loss of so many lives as a result of the earthquake and tsunami.

When disasters occur, our immediate response is to reach out and show that we care. Then we move to the stage of action by trying to determine how we can help. To this end, we begin to tap into unused resources, both human and tangible, to assist us in our endeavor. Quite often, we engage in debates about what to do and how to deliver the support. However, we have seen enough crises in 2011, including tornados in the Midwest and wild fires in Texas and Arizona that we have begun to develop sets of effective activities.

Throughout each of these disasters, we have learned about resiliency, action and hope. As one of our faculty members at Dillard, Robert Collins (Associate Professor of Urban Studies and Dean), wrote in a chapter in Resilience and Opportunity (Lieu, Anglin, Mizelle Jr., and Plyer, editors, 2011) and in his book on Resilience (2007), you must have a plan of response. Though his plans are tailored specifically for the larger or business community, Collins highlighted ten “Thou Shall” steps that I will modify for POD and for the higher education community to consider. “We shall:”

1. Have a written disaster or crisis plan for responding to colleagues
2. Communicate with affected colleagues through email, Facebook, Twitter, and mobile devices (pending a working infrastructure)
3. Teach faculty and staff how to respond to these tragedies in the classroom by designing an effective discussion about disasters
4. Post and create an array of resources on the web that cut across different forms of disasters
5. Educate faculty to use course management tools to communicate with and educate students
6. Assist in the development and offer of disaster management and homeland security courses, curricula and programs
7. Offer distance learning training and programs
8. Donate educational resources (books, laptops, etc.) to relief drives
9. Welcome and admit students on a visiting or provisional basis
10. Waive tuition if the student has paid at the home institution
11. Publish and integrate these historical events in textbooks, cases, books, articles, and other professional writings
12. Join with students to conduct service learning or community service projects that will benefit relief victims and institutions

As we have seen with the commemoration of 9/11, it is through our humanity, compassion, resilience, and action that we assist our colleagues to persist and grow stronger as they rebuild their educational lives.

Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, POD President

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As you may have heard by now, the 36th annual POD conference will be a unique collaboration with the **HBCU Faculty Development Network**. This joint conference has been in discussion for years and we're thrilled to make it happen in 2011. Please plan to attend this very special professional development opportunity.

The dates are October 26th-30th and the event will be held at the Hilton Atlanta. **Register online using Hilton's custom POD page:** <http://tiny.cc/1xrmu> or call 404-659-2000. The hotel is currently accepting reservations. If calling, mention "**POD Network Group Rate**" to get the group rate (\$130 per night for a single or double). The early-bird rate (\$450) and the Vendor Exhibit rates were *not* increased this year! For full details, including a link for registration, visit the POD conference page:

www.podnetwork.org/conferences/2011/index.htm

POD was able this year to offer reduced-fee scholarships for ten advanced graduate students and/or postdocs (each recipient pays just \$50 to register). Please take a moment to say hello to the following grad students and postdocs when you're in Atlanta:

Damon Williams, Georgia Tech, Engineering, postdoc**Alex Akulli**, Michigan State University, Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education**Troy Lescher**, Texas Tech University, Fine Arts**Spencer Robinson**, The Ohio State University, Slavic Languages and Literatures**Cameron Harris**, Indiana University, Higher Education**Andria Andiliou**, The Pennsylvania State University, Educational Psychology**Joanna Gilmore**, UT-Austin, Educational Psychology, postdoc**Chenxi Wang**, Auburn University, Higher Education

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Glené Mynhardt, The Ohio State University, Biology

Shannon Scotece, University at Albany, Political Science

Hope to see you in Atlanta,

--Hoag Holmgren, Executive Director

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Conference News

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The planning team for the 36th Annual POD Conference is gearing up for another exceptional event! This year, POD is collaborating with the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Faculty Development Network to bring you a program centered on the theme “**Create · Collaborate · Engage.**” Nearly all of the pieces are in place and registration is open. We warmly invite you to join us in Atlanta, GA this October 26-30!



Here are just a few of the exciting program components:

Plenary Speakers and Special Sessions

This year's plenary speakers include **James A. Anderson**, Chancellor of Fayetteville State University and **Belle S. Wheelan**, President of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. We have also arranged a special invited session that will feature **Bob Boice**, Tenured and Emeritus Professor of psychology, Stony Brook University. Prof. Boice will kick off the conference on Thursday, October 26 from 12:30-1:30 PM so plan your travel accordingly.

This year's Sunday Anchor Session will be a collaborative effort involving POD and HBCUFDN members. Presenters **Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens**, Otterbein College; **Peter Felten**, Elon University; **Laurette Foster**, Prairie View A&M; **Deandra Little**, University of Virginia; and **Michael Reder**, Connecticut College will address the topic of “Conceptualizing Our Work: Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning Programs.” The session will provide the closing bookend on Sunday, October 30. Again, plan your travel accordingly; you won't want to miss this concluding talk!

[Read more about plenary speakers and special sessions.](#)

create@POD

A 1st-time conference event, create@POD invites conference participants to engage in creative activity and gives them permission to take risks, to be open to new connections that may come from unexpected combinations of ideas, and to quiet the voice of the inner—and

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sometimes, outer—critic that makes us fear mistakes and ridicule. We invite members of POD and the HBCUFDN attending the 2011 POD/HBCUFDN conference to submit proposals for creative works which fit into one of the following categories: Ignite Presentations or Digital Stories. Participants' creative projects will be highlighted during the create@POD event scheduled for the evening of Thursday, October 27 from 8:30-10:30 PM. [Read more about create@POD.](#)

Program

This year's program features 173 75-minute interactive sessions (14 of which are POD/HBCUFDN joint sessions), 27 poster presentations, 24 roundtable sessions, 12 pre-conference workshops, 9 POD-sponsored sessions. You can also take advantage of a variety of vendor exhibits and interactive workshops, the traditional POD resource and job fairs, and special breakfasts for graduate & professional student developers and international POD attendees.

Register early to save your place!

Two program elements that require advanced registration are pre-conference workshops and educational expeditions. These special events fill up fast, so you will want to explore the many options and register early!

This year's pre-conference workshops feature the popular full-day session for new faculty developers, as well as other sessions on topics like faculty leadership, networking, engaging students, and metacognitive learning. [View a complete list of pre-conference titles and descriptions.](#)

Educational expeditions to the greater Atlanta area include The High Museum of Art, Atlanta History Center, The Martin Luther King Center Museum, and an evening with the Atlanta Symphony! [View details.](#)

Prices / Registration Information

[Conference registration is available online.](#) This year's conference fees—which are the same as 2010!—are listed below.

| | "Early Bird" Registration Fee (Postmarked or submitted online by October 1; deadline strictly observed) | Regular Registration Fee (Postmarked or submitted online after October 2 and before November 1) | On-site Fee (On November 1) |
|--|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Member | \$450 | \$490 | \$530 |
| Student (member) | \$290 | \$325 | \$365 |
| Retired (member) | \$385 | \$420 | \$455 |
| One Day Only (member: includes lunch) | \$160 | \$200 | \$255 |
| Meals only for attendee's guest (for entire conference). Membership is not required for meals | \$230 | \$230 | \$240 |

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POD is pleased to have offered several grant opportunities this year to help participants defray the costs of attending the conference:

- The NEA Office of Higher Education and NEA Minority Community Outreach Department provided five full scholarships.
- The Donald H. Wulff Diversity Travel Fellowships Program awarded up to \$1,000 to individuals (and up to \$2,000 for teams of two or more) to support their travel to the conference.
- POD's Committee on Graduate and Professional Student Development gave a Reduced POD Conference Registration Fee Award to ten postdocs and advanced graduate students across disciplines and professional schools.

Online Resources and Information

[View conference and registration details.](#)

[Visit the 2011 conference wikiPODia page.](#) We encourage presenters to post their session materials here as soon as possible, ideally before the conference begins.

Get the latest [2011 conference tweets](#) by following the official conference hashtag: #podhbcu.

Finally, see POD member [conference photographs](#) (and contribute your own).

Questions?

For more information about the 2011 POD Conference, please visit <http://podnetwork.org/conferences/2011>. The Conference Team is also happy to answer questions, and we invite you to contact any of us directly:



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Teams HBCUFDN and POD working on the program details.

[View more 2011 conference images.](#)



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The Oral History Project works to record the voices of POD leaders and establish a professional history that can inform our future leaders.

Bente Roed

Edited by Dakin Burdick



Bente Roed was the Director of University Teaching Services at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, from 1984 to 2005. She joined the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE; POD's Canadian counterpart) in 1985 and attended her first POD conference in 1989 at Jekyll Island, Georgia. She served on POD's Core Committee from spring 1998 to spring 2001. In 2006, she received the Christopher Knapper Lifetime Achievement Award from the STLHE. Since then she has been employed at .2 FTE in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at the university as a Faculty Development Associate. She also volunteers at the Victim Services Unit (Edmonton Police Service),

at 10,000 Villages (a fair trade store aiding artisans in developing countries) and at the Edmonton Baroque Ensemble. Her publications on printmaking can be found under the name Bente Roed Cochran. This interview took place on July 25, 2007.

Burdick: Could you please describe your career path in professional, instructional, and organizational development?

Roed: I believe that it began when I was with Athabasca University (AU) in Edmonton. At AU I was involved with the training of the institution's telephone tutors, probably in 1978-1979. AU is a distance learning institution modeled on the Open University in the U.K. Some courses were T.V.-based, radio-based, and tech-based, with tutorial assistance. The tutorial assistance was telephoning, as well as writing and periodic face-to-face interaction. At that time, the telephone tutors were required to be in contact with their students regularly. They needed some additional training in how to listen for what was said and not said and how to respond well to students who were either doing really well or who were in academic difficulties. I identified what was needed and provided professional development opportunities for these telephone tutors.

After that I got appointed to a position at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, which is the province's largest university in 1984, I headed up an independent university-wide unit, which

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was initially called the Office of the Committee for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning. Later it was renamed University Teaching Services (UTS). There had been one contract person there the year before I was appointed, so it was a fairly new endeavor for the university.

Under that contract person and the Chair of the Committee for Improvement of Teaching and Learning' leadership the unit provided a day-long orientation for graduate teaching assistants and then periodically some seminars and workshops for faculty.

There are centers that have been closed for political or financial reasons and sometimes those centers have been reopened a little while later. But that becomes a very traumatic experience for the people who were immediately involved in the closing of a center and it also makes it harder for the people who have to start up the center again later on, because there is a bad climate and feeling on that campus about all of those things. Certainly we've been through that a couple of times in the time I have been involved in faculty development. My center has been incredibly fortunate in that we have never been affected. We survived. We got increased financial resources and respect, but there were points in the early 1990s when I basically said to the President, "If you look at my budget and take something away, then eliminate me completely. Don't take anything. Don't take a third away. Don't take a tenth away. Just take it away." I think the reason that our budget wasn't affected was that it was not worthwhile. Instead, faculty salaries were reduced by either five or ten percent and my center was not affected. It made more sense for the President to have the center and to be able to say we've got a center for teaching and learning because our budget was so small that it would not have not made much of a financial difference to the institution. So sometimes there are advantages for being small and cheap.

I was Director of UTS from 1984 to 2005. I had the opportunity of building the unit and making it much more visible and productive within the university. Initially I had a part-time secretary. Later on, we were able to add one more professional person and support staff. We offered seminars and workshops for both full-time and part-time faculty and for graduate students. We developed and implemented two certificate programs, one specifically for graduate students who wanted to become future faculty. Another program was not limited to graduate students but included anyone who had aspirations to teach and who wanted to get certificate-type of designation that would help them in their job search or in promotion.

We provided an annual orientation for new faculty, which was something I started. I also initiated annual orientations for sessional instructors. We had an expanded program of orientations for graduate students. Initially we had only one in the fall semester, later we had orientations both in the fall and at the beginning of the winter or the January semester.

UTS's volunteer peer consultation program was also expanded. It is the oldest [program of its kind] in Canada. It was started in 1981-1982, before I started, and we expanded it from about five volunteer peer consultants to forty-two by the time I left. It was an incredibly powerful program; one that has benefited faculty who engaged in these voluntary confidential consultations and also benefitted the peer consultants themselves. The peer consultants were professors who were given special training. A small group of the experienced peer consultants and I designed a training program for prospective peer consultants that we introduced to colleagues in Canada and gave workshops both in Canada and abroad.

Burdick: These volunteer peer consultants, were they consulting on an interdisciplinary basis?

Roed: Yes, they had to be. There were few rules, namely that the client has to be voluntary. The consultation is confidential. The client and the peer consultant must be from different disciplines, because the client is the subject matter expert and what the two of them are working together on are instructional issues, not subject matter issues.

The consultation results in a written report. There is a personal meeting of the two -- client and consultant -- and then a written report, and that report is confidential. The client can show it and pass it out to anyone he or she wants, but we will never even disclose that the professor had asked for a consultation and had engaged in one.

Burdick: That sounds like a very powerful format.

Roed: Yes, it's incredible. On the national level, we have in Canada an organization called the STLHE, which is a sister organization to POD. I was very active in that and organized the first conference in western Canada for STLHE in 1989. The Society was originally formed in eastern Canada, and after 1989 they were persuaded that there was enough interest in the rest of the country that periodically they could have their conferences outside of the east. This was similar to what POD does by moving across the country. When I was involved in POD, I pushed very much for us to have a conference in Canada, and that led to the POD conference in Vancouver and later to the conference in Montreal.

Burdick: When did you first join the STLHE?

Roed: I probably joined in 1985. It [my first conference] was at Queen's University in Kingston. I've also served on something similar to POD's Executive Committee there.

Burdick: Could you explain that structure?

Roed: We have an Executive Committee at STLHE and then we have a separate caucus group which consists of people who are in faculty development. STLHE is a little bit different from POD in that many of its members are teaching professors. I know that there are some of those in POD too, but the majority of the POD membership, if I understand it correctly, are people who are directly involved in professional and instruction development. STLHE has many more faculty than professional developers because we don't have as many universities and colleges as you have in the States. To satisfy the people who are involved in professional and instructional development, we set up this additional group. Those of us who were in centers had a voice in that group and were able to move our agenda forward as well as supporting good instruction and good learning in general.

In both POD and STLHE, I gained interaction with professional colleagues and affirmation of things that we were trying out at the University of Alberta through UTS and how to make corrections to them if they didn't work out the very best way, or the way we had anticipated. I think from both groups, from conferences and from the meetings we had outside of conferences, there was an exchange of new ideas. There was a shared understanding of what was going on in the field of faculty development and how we could continue to support that at our different campuses. At both those society's conferences we also had the opportunity of presenting research findings or speculating on what you were engaged in, how it might go and then get feedback from the audience.

As you know, POD began as an American organization. But as more of us from outside of the United States became members, attendees, and presenters at POD's conferences, it was felt that we should have a representative on the POD's Core. Not that there hadn't been international representatives before it became formalized, as Ronald Smith from Concordia University in Montreal had been President of POD. We were certainly welcome. I mean it wasn't that we were looked at as some strange creatures. I think that we fitted right in because we were all on the same road towards improving the whole climate for teaching and learning. I think that the fact that there were more international people on Core and actively involved in the conferences may have broadened your countryperson's knowledge that things were happening outside of the U.S. and in a similar way. I mean that in a positive way, not in a negative way.

Burdick: Are there other ways that those two organizations have shaped your practice?

Roed: I think it has to do with understanding what is going on, what is needed in the field, what has worked in one organization, how one could tweak that to make it applicable to our home campuses. I think in the early years, there was a need for many of us to not feel alone. I actually had a very positive support system both from the university administration and from faculty, but I felt that there were some campuses where there was opposition to faculty development. Hence it was critical for us to meet periodically and feel... comforted may be too soft a word. But I think sometimes we needed that. We certainly needed affirmation so we could go back and continue the work we believed in very strongly. Both

organizations helped develop a common language about teaching and learning. As you know, we had some very inspiring keynote speakers at the various conferences. I think that armed with that ammunition, we could be more effective in our jobs and be more confident that we were doing things that would be helpful for professors and some students.

Burdick: How has your practice influenced POD or other developers?

Roed: I can think about one very specific example, because it was related to me. Laura Border was on Core for a number of years and was President of POD, and one of the things she really valued that I was doing was my newsletter [about 1990]. My newsletter was called the *Teaching and Learning Exchange*. I had a part-time writer who would come to the faculty development sessions that we organized and would report on what had occurred in those sessions, which meant that professors who had been to the session could get a summary of what had happened, in case they didn't take notes themselves, or if they just needed a refresher, and the people who were unable to attend that session could still get something about what happened there and could perhaps use that in their own teaching. There were three issues a year. The fall and the winter issues included a list of the seminars and workshops we had, and I think that inspired many colleagues, both in Canada and in the U.S., to come up with ideas of workshops and seminars that would work on their particular campuses.

Burdick: What have been the most important changes that you have seen in POD and the STLHE?

Roed: Since I've been involved for, oh, twenty-some years, both groups have grown in size. It's just been phenomenal. From a small group to now, where it's difficult to find a place that's big enough for us to hold our conference. Sometimes size can be very positive, and sometimes it can also have negative effects. I think that POD and STLHE have been very good at greeting newcomers to conferences and making them feel at ease with the more established conference-goers. I've been very impressed with how concerned both societies have welcomed new members and made them feel good. The conferences have also changed from being in places at the off-season to being in more easily accessible urban centers. I think that that was a major shift in POD, in that originally their philosophy was that we should be by ourselves for the whole conference in a kind of enforced togetherness, so we could work together effectively. It meant that they were often in places that took a lot of time to get to and get back from. I think that as we became more concerned about using our time and financial resources properly, we then went to more urban centers where it was easier to get into transportation-wise, where there were more options in case we brought partners or children along, who needed to go outside of the conference place. Another change I've seen in POD is that initially in Core, we had a consensus-model. We still have that, but we have shortened the time in getting to consensus. [laugh] That may be something that you may want to try out on other people, too.

Burdick: How has that been shortened?

Roed: Well, I don't think we quite voted, but our Core meetings back then took two and a half days. I think we got it down to considerably less than that, so either we were more focused or we were better prepared or the issues were more clearly outlined. Certainly between the time that I started and I ended, we had reduced it probably by half. It had to do with Kay Gillespie. She engaged us in a strategic planning process. I think that really set a new way for the Core committee and for POD to operate, and Christine continued that, as did Laura Border.

Burdick: Thank you very much for speaking with me.

Roed: You're welcome.

Dakin Burdick (Endicott College) is POD's Historian



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Continuing our series of international exchanges, our guest column is by Shelda Debowski (University of Western Australia), President of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA).

Times of Change and Challenge

Recently I attended the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) annual meeting in Belgium, where a number of national higher education networks were represented. This network has been in existence since the 1970s, but it is now becoming a more mature presence in the higher education sector. ICED is now graced by representatives from the U.S., Canada, U.K., Europe, Asia and Australasia, with new nations joining on a regular basis as they build a stronger emphasis on higher education teaching, learning and research. In many cases, their emergence as a new network has been assisted by existing ICED members or past presidents of the more established networks.

Each year we compare notes as to the issues that are emerging and the challenges that are being encountered by our respective members. This year was particularly fascinating, as we saw some immense shifts in policy, practice and sponsorship around the globe. It is very clear that there are increasing societal and government expectations relating to the skills and expertise that academics should demonstrate in their roles, particularly with respect to teaching and research productivity. Similarly, governments are regarding universities as employment incubators, and seeing the economic imperative as a primary function of the sector. However, the funding to help academics develop those skills is generally lacking. Instead, there has been a retraction of sponsorship in many countries as funds become tighter.

Of additional concern is the ongoing merry-go-round of governments copying each other as different policies are trialled. The demise of the funding to support the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) as a central hub for educational excellence and innovation parallels a similar diminishment of the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres in the UK, once an international beacon for those seeking guidance on disciplinary-based teaching and learning.

A concerning issue is that university stakeholders appear largely powerless in the face of political decision making that ignores the long-term benefits that these national services provide. The focus on short-term economies has reduced the capacity of the higher education community to share, exchange and learn from colleagues around the world as sponsored services have been pared back.

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One reassuring note, however, is the strong response by higher education networks to pick up where our governments have left off. In Australia, for example, HERDSA and other like societies have been able to take responsibility for preserving elements of the previous work of the ALTC. HERDSA has been fortunate in gaining funding to promote the ongoing exchange of knowledge and support for leadership, teaching and learning and dissemination of research outcomes. With its well established journal, *Higher Education Research and Development*, it will be aiming to continue to share and promote high standards in scholarship, research and practice, and to maintain productive spaces for professional and disciplinary learning. However, there is a real risk of losing the holistic support for higher education development as these different areas are preserved through voluntary societies, particularly as initial funding is for a 2.5 year period. Australia's experience offers an important caution for other nations as their governments watch with interest and consider how they might save some funding. The legacy of many decades can readily be lost if governments are not committed to maintaining that heritage. The real costs are yet to be calculated.

Through these experiences a number of questions have emerged: Why is higher education so vulnerable to short-term political expediency? Does society value higher education? Is the sector seen as an essential partner in building creative innovative knowledge economies, or is it viewed more mechanistically as an employment sausage mill – as many politicians would have us believe? How can we start to build a more secure platform to work toward our likely future/s? And what are they?

It is a time of change, and perhaps a time of reassessment as to how the needs of higher education can best be met. We need to work actively in promoting the growth of an international body of knowledge that is not dependent on government funding for its preservation and retention. We need to ensure that the learning and knowledge so far acquired is preserved, shared and reviewed by any who need it – anywhere in the world. Perhaps these troubling times are a good opportunity to look at international collaborations that will better serve a global higher education agenda. We need to ensure that the scholarship and research that underpins good educational practice is readily accessible for new nations moving into this sphere, and for other nations that have possibly forgotten that quality learning needs to be nurtured and valued. While the times are challenging and certainly confronting, they also offer a valuable time for reassessment and perhaps a new direction?

Shelda Debowski was recently elected President of HERDSA for 2011-13. She is Director of and Winthrop Professor of Higher Education Development at the University of Western Australia in Perth.

Contact: shelda.debowski@uwa.edu.au

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Improve the Academy](#)[Call for Core Self
Nominations](#)[Save the Dates](#)[Member News](#)[POD Essays on
Teaching Excellence](#)[Contact the Editor](#)**Call for Manuscripts: *To Improve the Academy*, Vol. 31****Deadline for Submission: Thursday, December 1, 2011**

The Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education invites submissions for the 2012 edition (Volume 31) of *To Improve the Academy*. Since its inception in 1982, this annual publication has showcased articles demonstrating scholarly excellence in research, innovation, and integration in faculty, instructional, and organizational development.

The audience for *To Improve the Academy* includes faculty development and organizational development professionals, administrators and consultants, all of whom work to improve the climate for teaching and learning in higher education. Manuscripts should focus on informing and helping these professionals with their work. They may be research-based, programmatic, or reflective pieces, but those describing new approaches and programs must include evaluative information. Manuscripts addressing issues of diversity, inclusive education, and other reflections of POD's core values are encouraged.

Manuscripts must be well written. **You are strongly encouraged to ask (a) colleague(s) to review your manuscript before submission.**

Submission Requirements

- Maximum length of articles is **20 double-spaced pages** in 12-point type, Times New Roman, standard margins (1" on all sides). Each chapter should be 4,375-5,625 words (approx. 17.5-22.5 double-spaced pages) including references, tables and figures.
- Manuscripts **must** be prepared according to the guidelines in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition (e.g., include running head and page headers; headings not numbered; correct reference format).
- Compose a title (up to 12 words) that clearly informs the reader about the content.
- Include an abstract of 100 words or less.
- Do **not** use footnotes.

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Please submit **two (2) copies** of the manuscript as email attachments in MS Word or rich text format:

- **One complete copy** with a title page that includes the names (in the order in which they should appear), mailing addresses, telephones, faxes, and emails of all authors; and
- **One “masked” copy** without author name(s), institution(s), or contact information. Identifying information in the text of the article should also be “masked.”

Name the two files starting with the last name of the lead author,

e.g.: Smith CompleteMS, Smith MaskedMS.

Email submissions by December 1, 2011 to:

James E. Groccia, Editor, *To Improve the Academy*, Vol. 31
Director, Biggio Center, Auburn University
tia@auburn.edu

Manuscript submissions will be acknowledged within two working days. If you do not receive an acknowledgment, please inquire.



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POD members who have been members for at least three years are invited to submit their name as a candidate to the POD Core Committee. The Core Committee is the primary governing body of POD and functions as its board of directors. Each member serves for a period of three years, beginning in the fall after the Core Committee election has occurred. Members are expected to attend all of the six meetings that occur during their term plus the spring Core meeting in 2012 (March 16-17), for a grand total of seven core meetings.

To nominate yourself, send your candidate's statement to the POD office at podoffice@podnetwork.org with "Core Self-Nomination" in the subject line. Statements must be received by **November 11, 2011**. Your statement should include:

- Name, title, institution;
- Background in professional and organizational development;
- Response to the question: What would you like to see POD accomplish over the next three years?

Statement should not exceed 750 words. Contact the POD office or the chair of the POD Nominations and Elections Committee, Peter Felten, pfelten@elon.edu, with any questions.

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Chris Clark (University of Notre Dame) was named an inaugural winner of an Award for OCW Excellence by the OpenCourseWare Consortium. Honored in the Texts and Illustrations category, Clark's course, Applied Multimedia Technology, was one of five winners chosen from among many entries, and the only winner from the United States. View [press release](#).



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Teaching Excellence](#)[Contact the Editor](#)*Toward the Best in the Academy Volume 21, Number 8, 2009-10**We continue featuring a selected POD Essay on Teaching Excellence in each issue of the POD Network News.*

Deep/Surface Approaches to Learning in Higher Education: A Research Update

James Rhem, The National Teaching and Learning FORUM

Perhaps no articles published in The National Teaching & Learning FORUM in its twenty year history have had as much impact as the pieces on "deep/surface approaches" to learning in 1995. The articles reported on 25 years of educational research begun in Sweden by Ference Marton and Roger Säljö in the 1970s and furthered especially by Noel Entwistle and Paul Ramsden in the UK and Australia. This research wasn't unknown in the United States, but it had been eclipsed by a focus on a psychological understanding of learning styles and the sense of a need for teaching to cater to a spectrum of innate personality types tied to preferred ways of learning – "visual learners," "auditory learners," *et al.*

Instead of looking at and trying to adjust to differences, the deep/surface researchers concentrated on observing commonalities. How did actual students actually study and what were the environmental cues that prompted them to take the approach ("deep" or "surface") they chose? This research and renewed awareness of it here have had a powerful influence on thinking about teaching and learning in higher education in the United States especially with regard to assessment. Why? Because the research has found that students' *intention* in studying/learning relates strongly to their perceptions of *what* they will be assessed on and *how* they will be assessed.

Probably the most influential finding of the original experiments, the researchers say, was what they describe as an "obvious aspect of learning virtually ignored by earlier research." And that was the fact that many students did not get the point of what they were reading "simply because they were not looking for it." Why were students not looking for the point? Because their perception of the learning environment (the class, the course) did not suggest to them that they could or that they would be assessed on their understanding of it. Generally, students were gathering the facts on which they expected to be tested. They did

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not differentiate between facts and meaning

and certainly did not feel empowered to see themselves as makers of meaning; hence, their relation to learning remained on the surface of understanding, never burrowing very deep into its pleasures, dangers or ambiguities.

The “deep/surface approaches” research connects with the insights of “learning styles” research at the crossroads of *how* students go about studying/learning. The “hows” vary: some students do depend more strongly on visualization for understanding than other students and so on. But student perceptions of the learning environment set their intention and their intention determines the vigor with which they apply their usual or preferred heuristics. In short, if students perceive that a course will be a Jack Webb (*Dragnet*) investigation where “just the facts” matter, that’s what they’ll go for. If they perceive that the course constitutes an investigation into the meaning or meanings the facts make possible, they’ll dig deep for that (or drop the course).

American, psychologically oriented treatments of learning styles tend to speak of four or five different styles, sometimes tied to introversion or extroversion or to preferences for visual versus auditory modalities or the like. The deep/surface researchers speak instead of two fundamental learning strategies students take—“*comprehension learning*” and “*operations learning*.” On the one hand “*holists*” (those following a comprehension strategy) engage a topic by forming a general picture of the whole which they use to guide them as they study the subject even as study inevitably requires modifying the initial picture. “*Serialists*” (concerned with operations) work more comfortably by constructing their understanding step-by-step by concentrating on an accurate grasp of details.

But just as on most streets traffic moves in two directions, learning sometimes requires one approach and at other times, another approach. Full understanding depends upon an alternation between the comprehension/holist and operations/serialist orientation as students look at facts in detail, follow their patterns of interconnectedness and relate these to larger ideas and concepts. Research indicates that this alternation, this interplay between approaches characterizes a deep approach to study and that there are three “sub-scales” directly involved in the process – ‘relating ideas,’ ‘use of evidence’ and ‘interest in ideas.’ Moreover, research finds a deep approach closely related to a conception of ‘learning as transforming.’ Students not open to the possibility that their learning will change them seem more likely to take a surface approach to their studies.

Research following the paths cut by the original “deep/surface” work has continued over the last 14 years with a number of findings that expand insights into the nature of the learning environments students encounter. The need to accommodate and adapt to disciplinary modes of thinking as part of forming a deep or surface approach to studying within the discipline is one of those findings. For example, while students have individual preferences in the way they learn – seeing versus hearing, etc – specific areas of study, specific disciplines, also often have ways of thinking embedded in them that are fundamental to forming understanding in those areas, and students must be led to see this without, again, being misled into believing that understanding lies merely in grasping the facts. At the same time, research also finds a deep approach associated with an ‘intrinsic orientation to the subject’; so students with a stronger native interest in art will have to work harder in calculus to find their way to a deep approach than those with a native interest in math.

Some of the findings in this research area sound at first like things wise parents and teachers have known for a long time. For example, Noel Entwistle wrote in a paper delivered at a conference on teaching and learning research in Canada last spring: “reaching a deep understanding also depends on the amount and quality of the effort put into learning.” But “effort” here has more to do with the strategies applied to study and the organization of the effort than with hours spent on the task or the intensity of the student’s worry about it. Still, much of the research does come down from the airy reaches of psychology to the homely realities of how real students actually behave. Thus it comes as no surprise that students who reflect a deep approach to their studies are also the students who take greater

responsibility for their own learning (self-regulation) and not only continually monitor their own studying, but put forth a more organized effort in it.

Sadly, research has found that it appears to be much easier to move students away from a surface approach to learning than toward a deep approach. As Entwistle also reported, "A deep approach starts, as always, with an intention to work out the meaning for oneself." What can teachers do to set the stage? A thoroughly thought-out, consistent design of the learning environment constitutes a first step. "Deep approaches depend on designing *teaching, assignments, and assessment* that act *synergistically* to support student learning and understanding," Entwistle continues, "and that *synergy* is crucial because even one important aspect 'out of sync' . . . can impede learning." Such a design says to students from the outset that learning as understanding remains the primary goal and repeats this message through the way in which its assignments and assessments are linked. Assessments that reward the mere recall of factual knowledge will not encourage deep learning unless accompanied by ones that assess students' ability to demonstrate understanding of its value by using it. Having every element of the environment reward reflection (and its natural offspring, understanding, as defined concretely in each specific learning project) strongly encourages students to fully perceive and embrace the larger goal of deep learning rather than simple surface achievement. And student perceptions of the environment perhaps as much as any other factor determine the kind and quality of the learning achieved. Entwistle admits: "it is not so much the teaching-learning environment we provide that affects the learning approaches of individual learners, as their *perceptions* of it." Whatever our success in influencing students overall, individuals will always remain individuals and some will never get it, as teachers have always known.

Still, looking back, while it may have been easier for faculty to just 'cover the material,' it was never more exciting or more valuable to the student than going for depth.

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Since fall 2010, Amanda G. McKendree has served as editor of *POD Network News*. Amanda joined the Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Notre Dame as Assistant Director in August 2009 where her primary responsibilities include coordinating university-wide graduate student programming and managing a staff of Graduate Student Associates in developing and facilitating teaching assistant orientations, pedagogy workshops for faculty and teaching assistants, certificate programs, and teaching apprenticeships/fellowships. She also consults with graduate students, faculty, and departments, and provides research services on teaching and learning topics. Her teaching interests include presentations and argumentation, business communication, gendered communication, and integrated marketing communication. Her areas of research activity include crisis communication, business communication pedagogy, and graduate student preparation for the professoriate. She holds a BA in Global Policy Studies, an MPA in Nonprofit/Public Management, and a Ph.D. in Rhetoric.

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